



EDITOR'S PICKS



Historical curiosity packs a punch

When the National Ballet of China tours abroad, the most popular repertoires are always *Raise the Red Lanterns* (2001) and *The Red Detachment of Women* (1964, pictured above).

The first is a lush, eclectic meeting of East and West, involving the movie director Zhang Yimou, modern dance choreographer Wang Xipeng, composer Chen Qigang and an international design crew.

The second is the best Chinese ballet created before the country opened to the outside world.

One of the "Eight Model Operas" during the "cultural revolution" (1966-76), *The Red Detachment of Women* is about a country girl who is abused by an evil landlord but then escapes and blossoms after joining the revolution.

The six-act ballet features heroic, social-realist ensemble choreography that brings to mind early works by Martha Graham, such as *Panorama* and *Sketches from Chronicle*.

For today's audiences, it is a historical curiosity that packs a punch. It's not every day that you can see a ballerina caressing the hammer and sickle. Seriously, the dances with sabers and rifles are electrifying.

7:30 pm, March 8 and 9, Tianqiao Theater, 30 Beiwailu, Xidiang district, Beijing, 010-6353-5709.

— CHEN JIE



The King's Speech dubbed in Chinese

The Academy Award-winning British film *The King's Speech* can be seen now in mainland theaters in both English and Chinese.

Many viewers will surely go for the original English version to enjoy the posh royal accent and refined lines, but the Chinese version has its charm, too.

Employees at the storied Shanghai Dubbing Studio contribute their vivid voices to the roles.

With their rich experience and professionalism, they faithfully fulfilled their roles, including the challenging repetitions and prolongations of sounds, syllables, words and phrases of the king suffering from his speech disorder.

The King's Speech is the first best film Oscar winner screened in mainland cinemas since Danny Boyle's *Sliding Doors* in 2009.

— LIU WEI

Star conductor leads the way

The Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra returns to the capital for the first time since its first visit in 1996. This time the conductor is Briton Daniel Harding.

The orchestra is not that big of a name for most Chinese, but it is one of the best in Europe. In 2000 it received a Grammy Award for best orchestra performance and was named the sixth best orchestra in the world by *The Gramophone* magazine in 2008.

The orchestra has been famed for playing Bruckner's works, since its founder and first music director Eugen Jochum got the ball rolling. In 1999, its recording of Bruckner's 10 symphonies, with the then director Lorin Maazel, won wide acclaim.

For the Beijing concert, it will perform Bruckner's *Fifth Symphony*. It is also the first time the 90-minute symphony has been performed at the National Center for the Performing Arts.

7:30 pm March 9, National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xichang'an Jie, Xicheng district, Beijing, 010-6655-0000.

— CHEN JIE

HOUSE of GOLD REFLECTS CREATIVITY

How should the old saying, "Inside a book is a house of gold," said to have been coined by Song Dynasty (960-1279) emperor Zhao Heng, be interpreted? *The Inside a Book a House of Gold: Artists' Editions For Parkett* exhibition proposes the answer — that it's the perennial and diverse reflection of the art world. The first exhibition of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in 2012 takes its title from Zhao Heng's quote because the center believes the emperor's words can illustrate the art world's evolution over the past 30 years, organizers say.

The show, which runs until April 8, displays 212 works by 192 artists from around the world to provide a collective portrait of the development and changes in art since 1984.

It features works by such global giants as Andy Warhol and John Baldessari, and Chinese artists, including Yang Fudong and Paul Chan.

UCCA's entire exhibition space has been rendered as a massive house to convey the concept of domestic space. It features a playroom, a studio, a wardrobe and a central garden that blossoms with bright yellow flower-shaped balloon works by American graphic designer Jeff Koons.

Works are of virtually every genre and are color-coded according to the rooms they're in. So, green is featured in the garden space, while pink dominates the playroom.

The exhibition is commissioned by the Swiss art journal *Parkett* and is part of its cooperation project series, in which visitors can read about artists in the exhibition's studio and reading room.

"We want audiences to feel the works by a special logic design," UCCA director and exhibition curator Phil Tinari says.

Works found in the playroom, for instance, are cute and resemble toys.

"The works displayed in the exhibition are small-scale and affordable, which didn't take too much space and made the audiences feel intimate," Tinari says.

Tinari says UCCA chose to cooperate with *Parkett* to enable viewers the experience of a walk-in encyclopedia of art from the past three decades.

"China has become a leading art market in the world," he says.

"In 2011, we had 500,000 visitors come to UCCA, which proved Chinese audiences' desire for art. *Parkett* is like a small museum and a large library of contemporary art, which goes perfectly with the title, *Inside a Book a House of Gold*."

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An ongoing exhibition explores the art world of the past three decades through physically creating the concept of domestic space. **Chen Nan** reports.

PARKETT'S CHIEF EDITOR BICE CURIGER IN FRONT OF THE WORK *THE HELP*, CUT-OUT FOUR-COLOR PRINT ON FABRIC BY PIPILOTTI RIST.



HABEAS CORPUS, SCULPTURE BY JON KESSLER



SIGH, SIGH, SHERLOCK!, FIBERGLASS BY URS FISCHER



LEMON PIG, STYROFOAM BY OLAF BREUNING

MOVIE Eager Tang Wei follows her star

By LIU WEI
CHINA DAILY

Tang Wei's latest film has picked up 10 awards in South Korea.

Called *Late Autumn*, she plays a prisoner who falls in love with a man she encounters during a three-day leave from jail.

She is the only foreign actress to win a best actress award at the 47th Baeksang Arts Awards in 2011.

The film is Tang's fourth major screen work, after she rose to stardom leading Ang Lee's controversial *Lust, Caution*, in 2007.

The explicit sex scenes with Hong Kong veteran Tony Leung are rumored to be the reason why she disappeared from mainland screens for two years.

She went to London to study theater and improve her English for one year, which helps her performance in *Late Autumn*, as almost half the lines are in English.

The film was shot mainly in Seattle, where the two lead characters meet. They fall in love, but do not quite know each other. Tang's Anna is a woman who has to return to prison after three days, and South Korean star Hyun Bin's role is that of a professional womanizer.

Tang loves her character, because she is so different from her real self, she says.

"I wear what I feel on my face — all my friends know that — but the character conceals her feelings after many frustrations in life," she says.

It was a challenging role to portray. Even with Hyun's character in an amusement park, Tang had to wear a poker face. Director Kim Tae-yong would shout at her to raise the corners of her mouth a little.

"It killed me, because dogdams are my favorite amusement park ride," she says. "I tried to control every jolly jumping cell!"

She says she appreciates the experience because she learned the power of hiding an actor's emotions when necessary.

She was a bit surprised to find that the film could become so popular in South Korea. Her English-language speech at the Baeksang Arts Awards was also widely praised by media.

"Maybe I should open a language school there," she jokes.

In her spare time in Seattle, she wandered the streets, talking to people at secondhand fairs and food markets.

She asked her Chinese friends to leave her alone, so she could be as close to the local language and culture as possible.

"One of the best things in an actress' life is traveling to different places to learn their culture and get to know the people," she says. "I spent one year in London, but that was not enough. I even went to study at the South Pole, maybe to learn something from penguins."

The film will premiere on the mainland on March 23.

You can contact the writer at liuw@chinadaily.com.cn.



Tang Wei plays a prisoner facing frustration in her latest movie, *Late Autumn*.



A Bed of Life by the Young Planners Group Committee.

ART IN THE PARK

The Hong Kong Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture gives a stroll in the park a whole new meaning. This year, the Hong Kong portion takes advantage of the natural greenery of Kowloon Park and the historic Heritage Discovery Centre.

The site contains a number of free-standing pavilions with internationally renowned firms, such as Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF), Morphosis, Steven Holl and MVRDV, showcasing exhibits side by side with Hong Kong's Kacey Wong and Shanghai-based Neri & Hu.

One of the most compelling installations is *A Bed of Life*, a four-part cube illustrating how different strata of Hong Kong society live within the same space. From luxurious furnishings to caged beds, the Young Planners Group Committee shows that grass may be greener, but it isn't necessarily bigger.

First presented in 2007, the biennale showcases works commissioned specifically for the event by professionals in the fields of architecture, design and planning.

Although Shenzhen and Hong Kong each hosts completely different shows with different curators and exhibitors, a cultural dialogue was forged between them and continues to grow. The Shenzhen portion of the biennale, held at Shenzhen Civic Square and OCT Loft, concluded on Feb 18.

Interactive exhibits and creative interpretations of bunk beds make the Hong Kong portion of the Bi-City Biennale worth a second look. **Rebecca Loo** takes a stroll through.



Curator Anderson Lee.

managing director of Index Architecture.

"We were trying to tell stories from different cities around the world. We separated the pavilions into different

geographical regions with young cities alongside mature ones. We tried to balance young architects with more established ones."

Kowloon Park was selected by the curators as the best site primarily due to its central location. It is a public space in a major tourist area easily accessible by public transit, ensuring that it will draw people who don't normally attend exhibitions.

Its major disadvantage is a limited amount of interior spaces.

(Kowloon Park sits between the busy Tsim Sha Tsui Nathan Road main shopping artery and the Harbor Center/Ocean Terminal blocks.)

The curators faced the choice of limiting the number of exhibitors to the Heritage Discovery Centre, or supplementing the exposition with temporary pavilions scattered throughout the park. They chose the latter and built a series of basic bamboo

structures serviced with lighting and electricity. Still, to house 21 exhibitors within the tight confines of Heritage Discovery Centre, parameters had to be set.

"This led to our bunk bed module," Lee says. The traditional 1.85-square-meter bunk bed was given to the international participants chosen for the center. They could deconstruct or embellish it to show their interpretation of 21st century urbanism in their respective cities. The exhibitors in the other pavilions had the bunk bed as an option, but they were not restricted to its parameters as space for them was not a restriction.

"The bunk bed encapsulates our theme," Lee says. "Hong Kong people can immediately understand the context of the bunk bed. The 'space' aspect is our collective memory of growing up in tight spaces. The 'time'

alludes to Kowloon Park previously housing military barracks with bunk beds for soldiers."

The interplay of time, place and people formed the "tri" portion of "Tri-ciprocal Cities", which is also a play on reciprocal. "I hope that this tri-alogue will continue long after the biennale is over," Lee says.

The biennale uses outdoor elements already present in the park, such as a maze garden. At its center, an installation dubbed *The City of Exchange* by Fung Yik-ping, Yung Sai-chun, Chan Ka-shing and Yip Chun-hang is designed like a mini-city with color-coded skyscrapers.

While serious architecture buffs will want to contemplate its deeper meanings, children play on its jungle-gym like qualities. "The biennale isn't meant to be a high art show," Lee says.

The curators received more than 200 entries and voted on which

installations should be included. Half of the final exhibits were culled from that selection process. The others were architects and designers they personally invited to contribute creations.

"Famous architects are the easiest to work with!" Lee exclaims. "They already know what's involved when submitting work for a biennale. Gene and I were like conductors, who didn't know what the musicians were playing until we faced the audience on opening night."

Along with the installations, there are events held throughout the biennale both on and off the site that include panel discussions on such topics as architectural conservation, and children's workshops, guided tours and films related to urbanism.

Lee acknowledges the show needs tweaking. Signage could be better, and Kowloon Park's high traffic

IF YOU GO

Until April 23, closed on Thursdays: 10 am-6 pm, Monday-Saturday: 10 am-7 pm, Sundays and public holidays. Hong Kong Park and Hong Kong Heritage Discovery Centre, Nathan Road near Haiphong Road, Tsim Sha Tsui. www.hksbiennale.org

means that displays suffer from wear and tear quickly. Some of the touch-screen monitors have already taken a beating.

Breathing a sigh of relief at a job well done given the limited budget and time restraints, he feels confident that he can pass the curatorial torch on to the next eager team of architects for the biennale's following installment.

"It was a great opportunity to learn and grow," Lee says. "But I wouldn't want to do it again!"